

1/17/2011

Sheila James
565 Burton St. Apt 305
Missoula, MT 59802

Dear Legislative Finance Committee,

My name is Sheila James. I use Home and Community Based Services and personal assistance program to help myself live life to the fullest. Using HCBS enables me to interact more effectively in my community. I also use personal care assistants to help me with my hygiene and daily living tasks like bathing, dressing, meal preparation and eating assistance.

I face nutritional challenges every day because of my hiatal hernia surgery. Narrowing of my esophagus limits the kinds of food I can eat. Less time to prepare my meals is not another hurdle I want to jump over. 240 minutes per week divides this way:

Three meals per day = 11.4 minutes per meal

Two meals per day = 17.1 minutes per meal

One meal per day = 34.3 minutes per meal

I challenge anyone on the committee to consistently prepare nutritional meals with these time constraints.

I moved into a nursing home when I was 24 years old, and lived there for 10 years. I have been living independently now for over 20 years with the previously described help. Cuts to the personal assistance program will ruin my quality of life, because I will be forced to live in a nursing home for the rest of my life. I am not exaggerating when I tell you that I would rather die than live in a nursing home again.

I implore you to take my story into consideration before you make any cuts to Medicaid services. Please do not take away my independence. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Sheila James